

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 09567 01 OF 02 242040Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----105103 242147Z /65

R 241918Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8877
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMIIION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09567

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG
SUBJECT: UK REQUEST THAT ALLIES MAKE HIGH-LEVEL
DEMARCHE TO SOVIETS TO SECURE HESS' RELEASE

REFS: (A) STATE 87907
(B) BONN 5706
(C) STATE 64472
(D) BONN 4038 (ALL EXDIS)

BEGIN SUMMARY: ALL ALLIED CAPITALS HAVE AGREED TO
MAKE THE DEMARCHE TO THE SOVIETS ON THE RELEASE OF
RUDOLF HESS. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE
ON THE TIMING OF THE DEMARCHE. END SUMMARY

1. WE INFORMED THE UK BONN GROUP REP (EYERS) AND
FRENCH BONN GROUP REP (GAUSSOT) OF THE DEPARTMENT'S
POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF THE LEVEL OF THE
ALLIED DEMARCHE ON HESS (REF A). WE HAVE BEEN SUBSE-
QUENTLY INFORMED THAT LONDON STILL PLANNED TO MAKE THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 09567 01 OF 02 242040Z

DEMARCHE AT THE MINISTER OF STATE LEVEL BUT AGREED TO AN
APPROACH AT A LOWER LEVEL BY THE FRENCH AND US. THE
FRENCH REP (GAUSSOT) REPORTS THAT THE DEMARCHE IN PARIS
WILL BE MADE BY SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU, WHO IS THE
HIGHEST CIVIL SERVANT IN THE QUAI AND THIRD IN
RANK.

2. AT THE TRIPARTITE MEETING OF BONN GROUP REPS,
EYERS DISTRIBUTED THE FOLLOWING TEXT, WHICH THE UK
INTENDS TO USE IN ITS DEMARCHE.

BEGIN TEXT

SPEAKING NOTE

HESS (FOR USE IN AN APPROACH TO THE RUSSIANS ABOUT
THE RELEASE OF HESS)

A. HMG HAS ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS SOUGHT THE AGREEMENT
OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO THE RELEASE OF HESS.
MOST RECENTLY ON 29 APRIL LAST YEAR MR. JUDD,
MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE,
RAISED THE MATTER WITH THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN LONDON.
HMG NOTED WITH DEEP REGRET THAT, AS WHEN THEY HAD
RAISED THE QUESTION ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THE RESPONSE
OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS NEGATIVE.

B. HMG REMAINS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONTINUED
IMPRISONMENT OF HESS. IN THEIR VIEW THERE CAN BE NO
POSSIBLE JUSTIFICATION FOR KEEPING HIM IN PRISON ANY
LONGER. HESS IS NOW 83 YEARS OLD AND HAS BEEN IN PRISON
FOR MORE THAN 37 YEARS. THERE HAS BEEN PUBLIC INTERESTZ
IN THE UK IN THIS CASE FOR SOME YEARS. THIS HAS
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PAGE 03 BONN 09567 01 OF 02 242040Z

INCREASED AS HESS HAS GROWN OLDER AND THE HUMANITARIAN
REASONS BECOME MORE AND MORE EVIDENT. THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT SEES THIS QUESTION NOT AS A POLITICAL ONE
BUT AS A MATTER OF PLAIN HUMANITY.

C. UNLESS HESS IS RELEASED SOON HE WILL DIE IN PRISON.
HIS DEATH IN SPANDAU WOULD GIVE RISE TO WIDESPREAD
CRITICISM OF THOSE WHOM PUBLIC OPINION HELD RESPONSIBLE.
CRITICISM EXPRESSED IN PARLIAMENT AND BY BRITISH PUBLIC
OPINION WOULD BE BOUND TO FOCUS ON THE SOVIET UNION
AS THE COUNTRY WHICH IS ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR PREVENT-
ING HESS' RELEASE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOVIET
UNION WOULD DERIVE GREAT CREDIT FROM A HUMANITARIAN
DECISION TO RELEASE HIM.

D. ACCORDINGLY, WITH GREAT EMPHASIS, HMG URGES THE
SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON THE
MATTER AND TO AGREE TO THE RELEASE OF HESS.

END TEXT

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PAGE 01 BONN 09567 02 OF 02 242039Z
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-----105077 242148Z /65

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09567

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3. THE US REP COMMENTED AT THE MEETING THAT THE DEPARTMENT, IN PREPARING ITS DEMARCHE, WOULD PROBABLY NOT WISH TO REFER SO EXTENSIVELY TO PUBLIC OR CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE HESS CASE. THE ESSENTIAL POINTS OF ANY DEMARCHE WERE THAT HESS SHOULD BE RELEASED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS BECAUSE HE IS OLD, HAD BEEN IN PRISON FOR DECADES, AND HIS CONTINUED IMPRISONMENT SERVED NO USEFUL PURPOSE.

4. SUBSEQUENTLY, GAUSSOT REPORTED THAT PARIS AGREED IN GENERAL WITH THE BRITISH SPEAKING NOTE BUT WOULD MODIFY PARA C. HARPER INFORMS US THAT THE BRITISH DO NOT FEEL THAT THE ALLIES HAVE TO AGREE ON THE TEXT OF A COMMON DEMARCHE BUT HOPES THAT FRANCE AND THE US WILL FOLLOW THEIR SPEAKING NOTE INsofar AS POSSIBLE.

5. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE COORDINATION ON THE TIMING OF THE ALLIED DEMARCHES, THE ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS AGREED TO SUGGEST JUNE L5. THIS DATE WAS CHOSEN TO ALLOW SOME TIME TO PASS AFTER THE NATO MINISTERIAL. IT IS,
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PAGE 02 BONN 09567 02 OF 02 242039Z

HOWEVER, A SUFFICIENTLY EARLY DATE TO MEET ALL CAPITALS' DESIRE THAT THE DEMARCHES BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WILL NOT BE SO CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO THE FRG TO ALLOW A CONNECTION TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN THE VISIT AND THE DEMARCHE. THE ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS ALSO AGREED THAT, IN VIEW OF THE PRACTICE OF PAST ALLIED DEMARCHES ON HESS, THERE WAS NO NECESSITY THAT THE ALLIES MAKE THE DEMARCHES ON THE SAME DAY. IT WOULD ADD EMPHASIS TO THE DEMARCHES, HOWEVER, IF THEY COULD ALL BE MADE ON JUNE 15 OR WITHIN ONE OR TWO DAYS ON EITHER SIDE OF THAT DATE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON THE TIMING OF THE DEMARCHE.
STOESSEL

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